

Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee Minutes

April 1, 2010

Members Present:

Dr. Tim Webb, Chairman, Jimmy Bailey, Dr. Gary Nixon, Mike Edwards, Darrell Freeman, Dr. Jesse Register, Jill Levine, Pam East, Kenny L. Heaton, Tomeka Hart, Patty Kiddy, Rep. Harry Brooks, Rep. Mark Maddox, Judy Stewart

Members Absent:

Sen. Dolores Gresham

Visitors:

Brad Smith, Christy Ballard, Gera Summerford, Nicki Fields, Nancy Youree Duggin, Susan Dalton, Terrance Gibson, Kaneal Alexander, Tim Gaddis, Dr. Barbara Denson, Roger Schulman, Dr. Johnny Crow, Ellen Thornton, Amanda Anderson, Robert Greene, Beth Rickert, Alice Cain, Dr. Bill Sanders, Dr. June Rivers, Alene Arnold, Sylvia Flowers, Emily Carter, Meredith Ross, Cheryl Richardson, Dr. Earl Wiman

The second meeting of the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee was held on April 1, 2010 at the Tennessee Education Association. Dr. Tim Webb, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Introductions of visitors and members were made. Terrance Gibson and Dr. Earl Wiman of TEA welcomed the group.

Dr. Webb introduced Deputy Governor John Morgan who thanked the group for its service. He explained that winning the Race to the Top grant not only complimented the state's plans but accelerated them. He acknowledged Tomeka Hart and Dr. Webb for their efforts as a part of the Race to the Top presentation team. The very aggressive time frame to complete the work was emphasized, and Deputy Governor Morgan assured the committee that any necessary resources, staffing or national experts would be provided.

Department of Education General Counsel Christy Ballard reviewed Public Chapter 2, the state's First to the Top legislation. Areas from the law that she specifically addressed included the committee's charge, the menu of options in subsection A, and the grievance procedure outlined in D2, Section 10.

Roger Schulman of the New Teacher Project, a national non-profit organization, made a Power Point presentation to the committee. He pointed out the persistent achievement gap between

poor minority students and their white counterparts stating that the effectiveness of the teacher is the single most important factor. Five conclusions of the Widget Effect Study include:

- Only one percent of teachers are rated as unsatisfactory
- Excellence goes unrecognized
- Professional development is inadequate
- Novice teachers are neglected
- Half of the surveyed schools had not dismissed a probationary teacher in five years

In addition to a new model for evaluation, Mr. Schulman emphasized as equally important the training, the implementation, how the evaluations are conducted, and teacher selection. He went on to say that training is needed for administrators in having difficult conversations, resources must be available to back up the conversations, and that teachers must be provided strategies for improvement.

He described four components of an effective teacher evaluation model:

- Coverage
- Alignment to excellence
- Precision of language
- Inference

Mr. Schulman urged the group to think of evaluation performance management, beginning with selection, continuing with observation, and feedback with an ongoing formative circle leading to a summative conclusion.

Dr. William Sanders of SAS reviewed the student growth model used in Tennessee. He described it as the most reliable, robust system of its kind. While the concepts that undergird the system are simple, the computations are complex. The academic progress of every Tennessee student is followed from the third grade on. While there is a huge error of measure for a given child on a given day, there are methods used to shrink the margin of error in order to receive reliable data. All schools are presumed average until the weight of the evidence pulls them away. The reliability of the annual estimates of growth increases each year.

Dr. Sanders contrasted achievement which is a raw test score with growth which is a measure of progress. He stated that without question high achieving schools can also demonstrate high

value added scores. He further stated that students of varying achievement levels can demonstrate high growth when taught by an effective teacher. Mike Edwards commented then that it would make sense that differentiation would be an element on which teachers are evaluated. Mr. Edwards then asked if Tennessee would have to recalibrate due to new standards. Dr. Sanders explained that a new growth standard has already been set based on 2009 and should be reset every five to ten years. Tennessee Value Added Assessment System results are to be sent electronically, dramatically increasing the delivery time.

Brad Smith of SCORE discussed teacher evaluation from a national perspective, specifically:

- Teacher U
- New Leaders for New Schools
- The New Teacher Project
- Teach for America
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Mr. Smith also discussed lessons learned from the implementation of Tennessee's Career Ladder program. He emphasized the need for any model to be:

- Reliable and valid
- Clearly communicated
- Created with teacher input
- Implemented with fairness and fidelity

Mr. Smith reviewed five current Tennessee innovations in teacher evaluation:

- The Teacher Effectiveness Initiative in Memphis City Schools
- The Teacher Effectiveness Initiative in Metro Nashville Public Schools
- The Kim Marshall Evaluation Pilot in Hamilton County
- The Teacher Advancement Program in Knox County
- The Battelle for Kids/Association of Independent and Municipal Schools initiative

Mr. Smith stated that the work being done in these five initiatives are meant to be informative to the work being done by the committee.

Erin O'Hara from Governor Bredesen's policy office reviewed the committee's time frame and the three phases of discovery, recommendation, and implementation. She hopes that a facilitator for the committee will be selected before the next meeting and asked that any ideas on facilitator selection be sent to her.

Alice Johnson Cain, Education Director of the Hope Street Group, was introduced. Hope Street Group is a virtual organization connecting policy makers and practitioners. She said that currently there are teachers in twelve states working on what a good teacher evaluation should look like. She volunteered to link the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee electronically making the Hope Street Group Library of Tools available.

Erin O'Hara asked that sub-committees inform Barry Olhausen about any meetings so that they can be made public.

TEA President Earl Wiman asked the group to consider the issue of capacity as a framework for a new model is developed. He encouraged the committee to develop a framework in the context of what teachers and principals do every day with a goal of improving practice daily.

The next meeting of the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee will be April 29 and approximately every two weeks thereafter.

Dr. Webb adjourned the full committee so that sub-committees could meet individually.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Olhausen